

AN
ADDRESS

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DELIVERED BEFORE

The South-Carolina Society,

ON THE

OCCASION OF OPENING THEIR

MALE ACADEMY,

ON THE 2D OF JULY, 1827.



BY WILLIAM GEORGE READ,

PRINCIPAL OF THE SAME.



Written and Published at the Request of the Society.



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CHARLESTON, JULY 3D, 1827.

“ At a meeting of the SOUTH-CAROLINA SOCIETY, it was
“ *Resolved*, that the Steward, in behalf of the Society, solicit
“ from the Principal Teacher of the Male Academy, a copy of
“ his Address for publication, and that they cause the same to
“ be published and distributed among the members of the
“ Society.”

Extract from the Minutes.

WILLIAM BEE, *Clerk.*

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ADDRESS.

THE belief that a public Address, on the occasion of opening the MALE ACADEMY of the SOUTH-CAROLINA SOCIETY, might possibly contribute to the early success of our experiment, induced a very recent request from the Committee, that the Principal would be their organ for explaining their general views and expectations. I have, accordingly, endeavored to comply, though labouring under a peculiar pressure of official and domestic occupation ; not unwilling to incur the censure inseparable from hasty composition, if I might so advance the interests of the Institution to which I have devoted myself, and chiefly anxious lest the failings of the champion should be identified with his cause.

From a glance at the condition of society, it is impossible to resist the conviction that the discipline of our Southern youth, has, for a long time, been miserably neglected. Late institution in the rudiments, and premature dismissal from the restraints of education, may be safely stated as the leading principles of the prevailing system. The task of elementary instruction, offering but limited returns of dignity or emolument, has been suffered to devolve from its legitimate functionaries on the adventurers of learning, who, feeling the sting of genius, have wrested some slender opportunities from niggard fortune, and seek an honourable barter of their limited acquirements for present support, while pressing on in the paths of professional ambition. With the scanty knowledge to be derived from such sources, a large proportion of the

community approach the toils of busy life, there to gain from experience almost all that they should have carried from their schools : while the few, whom the fortunes or fond hopes of their friends seem to designate for higher destinies, are transferred while the judgment is green, while the habits are uncertain, while the constitution is in the tender gristle, and the passions kindled, by the stimulus of climate and our peculiar institutions, into blazing fierceness, to seminaries remote from the parental eye, beyond parental control, where the most that can be promised or achieved by their governors is to spread the opportunities of knowledge before them, and distinguish the meritorious from the undeserving ; where they become estranged from our inhospitable seasons, and imbibe feelings and prejudices incompatible with our national security ; where they pine for the general influence on the opening character of domestic enjoyments, and are shaken in those religious principles we most earnestly would inculcate ; and where an erect ambition, sustained by strong resolution and powerful talents, constitutes almost the only guarantee against the syren blandishments of indolence and vice.

Would that my statement were exaggerated, that there were no corresponding record on the grave of blighted worth, and no echo from the despair of disappointed affection ! But if the fact be so, what should be the course of those who desire better things, and whose motto is “For Posterity” ?

The only efficient remedy, suggested to our anxious reflection, is that which has received the sanction of your Committee. To establish “*High Schools*” at home ; where domestic authority and academic discipline may go hand in hand ; where every branch of learning shall be cultivated which flourishes at our most eminent Universities, with the difference that it shall not be optional with the scholar to improve his advantages or not, and the acquisitions of the school find a ready application to the events of the passing day, amid the endearing and adorning relations of social intercourse ; where early attachments may wreath around objects and in-

dividuals, amongst whom life is to glide away; where the constitution may remain assimilated to the climate; where local interests shall pass under constant review, guarded by local feeling; where, in fine, religious impressions may retain the sacred distinctness they received from the hand of anxious love.

Upon these principles your Committee have founded their plan. It is proposed by them to provide alike for the instruction of those whose views are turned to the ordinary walks of life, and those who aspire to move in an higher sphere. They design to extend the limits of what is called an English education, and to embrace therein much that is, at present, to be acquired only by the self-directed exertions of individuals in after life, or with the expensive and perhaps unnecessary encumbrance of a classical education at most of the Colleges,* and which, notwithstanding, is essential to success in almost every liberal pursuit. It is difficult to conceive of an occupation to which accurate acquaintance with the mathematics and the elements of natural science would not bring the most valuable advantages. Indeed, we can rationally ascribe to no other origin the vast pre-eminence in the improvement of the arts which we are fond to claim for modern intelligence over that of the ages gone by; and to a yet more liberal diffusion of scientific knowledge among the business classes of society, can we alone look for the fulfilment of our brilliant dreams of the future. It is not sufficient for the necessities of mankind that the student should muse in his closet and project the lines by which society shall advance. We must have practical as well as theoretical Philosophers, men sufficiently familiarized with the analysis of principles to classify the new facts which occur to their daily experience, and pursue the brilliant hints which often flash on the weariness of their path.

* A characteristic, and I believe a solitary exception to the general rule obtains at Harvard College, Cambridge, (Mass.)

But your Committee have extended their views beyond the mere professional success of the individual. They have regarded him as a constituent member of a great political community, the destinies of which are to be modified, like the motions of the earth by the most distant star, by the opinions and conduct of the humblest citizen. The principal object of Republican institutions is to complete the triumphs of art over the irregularities of nature, by counterbalancing those original inequalities which tend to sweep along in the vortex of individual progress the welfare of the many. There is but one mode, however, either practicable or just, by which this may be effected; and that is, to disseminate accurate knowledge so widely, that ingenuity may be foiled by enlightened common sense, whenever enlisted under the banners of error. It has been considered necessary, therefore, to present the fundamental truths of political economy to every opening understanding, that their application to the concerns of life may hereafter prove as easy as that of the simplest rules of practical morality.

It is equally important that the citizen should be acquainted with, and taught to venerate, the Constitution of his country: else what shall guard him against the delusions of interest when the general notion of his political free agency tempts him to its gratification? To what but the neglect of our fathers in this vital particular shall we, at the present day, ascribe the encroachments, oppressions, and discontent, which derange our national system? In a community where every man holds the elective franchise by birthright, I would inculcate his constitutional obligations with earnestness, second only to that with which I would teach him his duty to his God. In either case he will be but too prone to transgression, without the blind impulses of selfish ignorance, or the intoxicating draught of superficial information.

But education would be incomplete for the merchant or mechanic which should stop here. It is of the essence of our political system that our country shall avail herself of the abili-

ties and information of all and each of her children ; which selfish vanity or filial love will always place at her command. Nor is it less a subject of regret that much of the wisdom and talent of the community has been hitherto extruded from the public service, by the competition of the profession most practised in extemporaneous argument and public speaking. I mean no derogation from that high calling to which I bent my earliest hopes, and among whose humblest votaries I am still proud to rank.

Legal precision, legal astuteness, the profound investigation, prompt intelligence, extensive information, and liberal views of legal men, must enter largely into the composition of every well compacted legislative body ; but I do not hesitate to add, that, were more men associated in the councils of the nation, whose peculiar pursuits bring home to their bosoms accurate knowledge of the condition of public affairs, and the operation of public measures, these would be regulated by sounder principles, and there would be less scope, among the depositaries of national confidence, for personal intrigue and selfish compromises, at the cost of the best interests of the country. As it is, none from the start bend their views to the summit, but the enthusiast taught to consider his Blackstone the only certain step in the political ascent. If peculiar circumstances bring to notice a candidate from other occupations, it is rather regarded as a matter of accident than the result of pre-concerted movement. So far then is the community limited in the choice of its principal servants, and in an equal degree is the selection likely to be defective.

In reference, therefore, to their possible labours as orators and statesmen, we shall endeavour to discipline our pupils by the strictest rules of Logic, to imbue them with metaphysical Philosophy, and habituate them to the analysis of moral conduct, and familiarize them with the theory and practice of Rhetoric. Let it not be sneeringly objected, that these academical exercises will not, alone, create an efficient public character. It is enough that they are regarded among its

indispensible requisites, and we shall redeem our pledge, if our pupils go forth to life with a sound elementary preparation.

An equal degree of attention will be applied to classical literature in the case of students who are destined for the learned professions. It is believed that while too much importance has, at times, been attributed to this department of knowledge, and a frightful waste of time and labour incurred in its cultivation, it is by far too valuable to be excluded from the education of any one who aims to be "a scholar, and a ripe and good one." At the same time, it cannot be denied, that the systems of institution which have come down to us, consecrated by the names, and, I might add, the sufferings of our forefathers, are utterly inapplicable to the exigencies of modern and especially American Society; independently of their intrinsic unfitness to the very ends of their adoption. I have no hesitation in saying, that our youth should spring responsive to the call which urges them betimes from the seclusion of the cloister to take an active part in real life. I freely admit that, were the question put to me, shall a promising and well prepared lad of sixteen or seventeen remain another year at school, or plunge at once into the turmoil of business? I would say let him go, where his faculties shall be sharpened by rough collision, and where the experience he purchases will remain by him for life. But I still contend, that the boy whom, like FOX or PITT, his friends would rear to greatness from the cradle, should be deeply imbued with the love of antiquity.

It has become fashionable, I am aware, to question the utility of this branch of learning; and doubts and sneers have, of late, assumed a more distinct and positive form. We have the assurances of one of our most accomplished jurists, that having "devoted as much time and zeal, and industry," to its cultivation, "as most of the scholars of our country," he is conscious of having derived from it "no substantial benefit." It would be foreign to my duty, and es-

pecially to my feelings, to attempt a regular analysis of the precise arguments of this erudite dissentient from general opinion, even as it might decide on his own peculiar case ; nor would they have received such pointed notice here, but in testimony of that universal respect for their learned author, which renders it necessary, upon the present occasion, to endeavour to neutralize their force upon the public mind, by advancing a few remarks of an opposite tendency.

We may readily discover, if we seek them, the causes of general disrepute to classical studies. Foremost, stands the incapacity of teachers ; from an absence of that provident case, in the heads of the social family, which has fostered, in other lands, among the splendors and emoluments of literary honors, a corps of competent instructors for the rising race. I would be understood to speak in general terms, without reference to some most respectable exceptions of preceptors, under whose care the choicest spirits of our country received their first impulse. But I boldly ask, is it not, as I have stated above, that the department of classical instruction, in our schools and colleges, is filled by candidates for the Bar or the Ministry, who have barely managed, with honorable and often heroic privations and toils, to qualify themselves for, and hurry through an imperfect collegiate course ? Has not the same short-sighted economy, which, in some of these United States, has restricted us in the choice of Judges, to the very refuse of the legal profession, or ignoramuses who know not the crime of arson from that of burning a barn,* so limited the profits of instruction, as a business, that no man of talent and energy is invited by their permanence and certainty to resign the hopes of contingent gains which pertain to occupations, the transactions of which are susceptible of indefinite extension ? Has a sufficient measure of respectability attached to the care of training society to learning and virtue, to

* This was the case with a " Chief Justice " of a " Supreme Court " within, I may say, my own knowledge.

relieve a sensitive soul of a fevered impatience to throw off the degraded and degrading name of a Schoolmaster? In such circumstances, it were idle to look for mature erudition in those to whom we commit the guidance of the young.— They cannot be accomplished Philologists. They cannot teach the Greek or Latin philosophically. The most they can be expected to do is, to retrace with their pupils their own limited career, and they morally fulfil their contract, if successful in communicating to the majority a few superficial impressions, and exciting in the talented a zeal commensurate with their own for practical distinction in society. Here then is the first principle of the evil. The effect becomes, in turn, an active cause of general disgust. In no department of learning is correct and *early* institution more essential to success than in classical literature. At the age when men begin to perceive their deficiencies, and labour spontaneously to supply them, it is too late to begin a critical study of Latin and Greek. Other objects, of more immediate and general interest, press *then* on the attention; and the few who possess resolution or taste, to return with assiduity to Lexicons and Grammars, find themselves, on their later entry on professional life, in the predicament of an Athlete, who should protract his preliminary exercises, while his rivals were summoned to the arena and struggled for the crowns.

Another class of objections to classical pursuits, is ultimately derived from the forcing influence of our Republican institutions. In communities, where the road to usefulness and honor lies open to all who are able and dare to travel it, and where public feeling naturally turns most propitiously on the artisans of their own fortunes, there must inevitably obtain a more extensive measure of intellectual excitement than elsewhere; but success is generally proportionate to the number of experiments, and, consequently, examples abound of men who rise, by the mere dint of natural ability, to the highest grades of public confidence. While the eye can rest on WASHINGTON, and MARSHALL, and KENT, and CHEVES,

we are apt to disparage, as useless or superfluous, whatever advantages they have not enjoyed; forgetful how many might share in their privations who would vainly emulate their natural endowments; and omitting entirely from the account our JEFFERSONS, MADISONS, and let me add, without dereliction of my political opinions, the laborious man of books, JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Thus the aspect of society presents us, in relation to our subject, with an unprofitable waste of early toil, disappointed votaries of the Belles Lettres, and brilliant exemplars of merely practical acquirement; and it becomes a serious question to some, who measure their early attainments against the geometrically progressive improvement of a matured understanding, whether aught beyond empty "accomplishment" may be derived from the study of the classics? While those, who know nothing about them, argue with the summary Logic of Goldsmith's sceptical Professor—"I have eaten, drunk and slept, *without Greek*, and so I don't believe there is any good in it." I repeat, with unfeigned sincerity, that were the acquisition of ancient literature to be compensated by a delay of entrance upon professional labours, when the mind is ready to commence them with effect, or the sacrifice of any branch of useful knowledge, I would unhesitatingly reject them from a general system of bare worldly education. But this cannot be conceded, until it be proved that the majority of European youth, who have improved the opportunities of liberal education, are less faithfully initiated in the mysteries of science than we could wish our own to be, or that PITT and CANNING commenced their public career too late, who, while moulding at will the destinies of mankind, have yet stooped to electrify nations with a brilliant classical quotation.

There is an interval between the developement of the perceptive and reasoning faculties. In minds of ordinary growth, this may be assumed to extend from about the eighth to the sixteenth year. So long, then, should a boy be required to

attend, as an habitual exercise, to Greek and Roman Literature ; and I pledge myself, that, under judicious conduct, he would, long before the expiration of the term, find little more difficulty in the perusal of the best ancient authors, than he would encounter in those of his mother tongue. Now, during this period, what would it avail to spread before him the treasures of Bacon, Hume, or Locke ? How much per diem could he extract from those mines of thought ? Perhaps the experience of us all will designate some time, about the sixteenth year, as that when we began to read any, but the authors of narrative, with interest or advantage. A boy may be supposed to study eight or nine hours each day, including the exercises of rehearsal, and the manual operations of the school. How many of these would you have him devote to mathematical calculations, so exhausting to the strongest faculties ? How long should he apply to Geography or History ? For a large proportion, even of the elements of Science, some degree of maturity in the understanding is requisite. Much that belongs to inductive reasoning, and nearly all that appertains to taste, must be referred to a later period, and cautiously exhibited to the opening intellectual vision. The object of early instruction, independently of the cultivation of industrious habits, is to exercise the faculties as they unfold themselves, and the acquisition of materials for future use. But nothing can be better adapted to the former end, than the study of language. The flexible organs, quick observation, and the memory “ wax to receive and marble to retain,” indicate it, as it actually is, the natural employment of childhood. “ Translations from one language to another,” says the venerable and profound Logician, who has long presided in the chair of Intellectual Philosophy at Cambridge, “ require a constant and careful comparison of the corresponding words of different languages ; an exercise doubly “ important for children, as it serves to improve their discern- “ ing faculties, and, at the same time, leads them to ascertain “ the exact import of words. The correctness of every process

"of judgment and reasoning depends immediately or ultimately
 "on the accuracy of our comparisons."* Much, it is true, may be acquired at this early age, of the rudiments of Science, but the mind must not only be tasked to the extent of its ability, but relieved by alternations of employment; and these, in a well regulated system, will admit of sufficient attention to classical instruction, for all legitimate purposes.

If you drill a boy beyond a limited time at Mathematics, you wear his intellect and constitution to a shred. If you keep him forever at Geography or History, (the narrative of History, which is all boys are adequate to) you crush his memory with a burthen it must throw off or escape from. If you cramp him for hours over a copy book, you disgust him with writing, and he would read more of any of the easier British Classics, Addison, Steele, or Johnson, for instance, in thirty minutes, than he could understand or remember. Much time will always be to spare, then, for the advantageous cultivation of the ancient languages. If it be objected that my argument proves too much, and would indicate the study of the Classics to all classes of men, I reply, would it could be so! But all classes of men have not the means or the leisure for it. The necessities of many demand a more continuous exertion of their bodily than their mental powers, to satisfy the wants of the passing hour. But, because some are debarred from peculiar opportunities, it does not follow that all should be so too, or that they would yield advantage to none. Infants are the better for air, and exercise, and comfortable clothing, and nourishing food, and judicious nursing, and yet myriads are doomed to struggle against unwholesome exhalations, and confinement, and cold, and hunger, and neglect, from their first entrance on this scene of care. We thank God that we can teach the principles and sanctions of their social and religious duties to those in our immediate charge, and excite them to healthy

* Hedge's Logic, p. 25.

action by a prudent exhibition of generous examples, and restrain their deviations by affectionate prevention ; yet, how many are exposed to the unintermitted rage of the moral pestilence, and know no limit to profligacy but the penal code ! The learned professions, in America, have, from obvious causes, become crowded. Their emoluments incur proportionate diminution. Numbers must in consequence turn to other pursuits, whose parents are able and willing to give them liberal educations. But admitting, what is by no means probable, that to a large portion of accomplished scholars, their classical attainments would, in after years, be useless, from want of opportunity or inclination to recal them, would it injure a farmer, merchant, seaman, soldier, or civil engineer, to understand Homer and Virgil, if in learning their respective idioms, he had acquired habits of profound and accurate thinking ?

I have not, it will be understood, attempted to enumerate the branches of knowledge that should occupy the attention of boys, but merely to exemplify the proportion that should be observed in the exercise of the different faculties. As the Perception and Memory are more vigorous in early youth than the Reason, the care of instructors should tend to their more frequent and continued exertion. As the Attention is volatile and weak, frequent alternations of employment should supply it with adequate excitement.

It is difficult to discuss these subjects with precision. The operations of the mind are complex, or rather, what we are accustomed, for convenience, to denominate different faculties, participate, more or less, in every intellectual process. Thus some exercise of Memory is involved in every train of Reasoning, and it were difficult to present a subject purely to the Memory which would afford no scope for inference and deduction. I refer to occupations which furnish employment to the several faculties in different degrees. For instance, the study of Geography affords almost equal exercise to Memory and Reason. A verbatim rehearsal of the

text-book would, of itself, profit nothing. A boy must read his lesson understandingly, as he would take his daily walk, or he would derive no more intellectual benefit from the one than the other. But it matters little, at first, how exclusively by rote we learn an arbitrary term or a grammatical form; a deep impression on the Memory being all that is required, of which future occasion will bring to light the use—as seamen carve their names upon a rock, uncertain, and perhaps, careless, at the time, whether other adventurers will discover them or no. But though the labour bestowed on classical studies at first, partakes more of the nature I have just described, it will, if the student be properly initiated, vary harmoniously with the gradual developement of the mental constitution. We must begin with the rules of Grammar and the independent signification of strange words; but, this previous task achieved, our business is the recollection and application of knowledge, while the subtle analysis of language sharpens the Ingenuity, stimulates the Imagination, and exercises the Judgment in repeated acts of discrimination.

We have briefly considered the mental discipline connected with classical studies; it remains to examine into the value of our supposed acquisitions. In the highest concern of existence, Religion, accurate acquaintance with Greek and Latin, is, for inquiring minds, of vital importance. With the exception of those who claim an immediate inspiration, no class of Christians can dispense with it. For those who insist on the necessity of investigation and research, and the free exercise of individual opinion on every point of doctrine, what can be more absurd, what more inconsistent, than to turn from the inspired records of Revelation, and pin one's faith on the "*ipse dixit*" of one's immediate pastor, or the founders of one's peculiar sect? To those who acknowledge the paramount authority of an infallible Church, how essential to know the grounds "of the hope that is in them," lest they prove obnoxious to the reproach of evading their difficulties by a single remove, like

the Indian cosmogonist, referring the world to his elephant, his elephant to the tortoise's back ! By a numerous class of Christians, it is believed, that much evidence, of the "doctrine once delivered to the Saints," is to be found in the writings of their immediate and other disciples, of the first ages of Christianity. By others, the books or some of the books, of the Testament, are assumed as the collective treasure of practice and belief, in which we must seek for ourselves and adjust, with humble hope in Divine assistance, a system of Religion. It is immaterial to my argument which may be right, for on both, if sincere, it is equally incumbent, to search for "the truth" in the original compositions of the sacred penmen, or where these have perished, as the Syro-Chaldaick of St. Matthew, in the earliest authenticated versions, and, in the case of those who admit the authority of "the Fathers," among their venerable elements of the primitive history of the Church.

I violate the sanctity of no man's opinions ! I claim to be any thing but a critical Greek or Latin scholar. I profess to know little more than the genius and philosophy, if I may so express it, of those languages ; upon which foundation, ill health at the University, and professional engagements in riper years, have as yet prevented me from raising an adequate superstructure : but, I solemnly declare, that I would not, for the collective glories of the world, exchange my present humble ability to examine for myself, the text of the holy writ, and the pages of the Greek and Latin Fathers, when I find them confidently cited in support of opposite opinions ; and I may be indulged in the belief, that they, who attach the same importance to either that I do, must possess a blinder faith in mere human authority than mine, if, with the opportunity fairly before them, they neglect to do so likewise.

But it is not solely in relation to Sacred Science, that advantage may be derived from a knowledge of these venerable idioms. To the vast storehouse of Technology, they furnish us with a master key.

By a peculiar fortune, the sages of classical antiquity have transmitted to us the records of their merit, engraved in characters imperishable as the monuments which bear them. It is not my design, nor does it accord with my ability, to attempt an antiquarian disquisition upon the origin of the Sciences. We may admit, that the Greeks were indebted for their knowledge to their oriental progenitors, and yet claim for them the scarce less honourable distinction of having preserved it for us; and perhaps the fact of their comparative improvement was correctly stated in the majestic antithesis of an American Scavan, "the astronomers of Chaldea went up to the stars in their observatories, but it was a Greek who first foretold an eclipse and measured the year." We are not, however, now concerned to inquire whether, or how far, we be practically indebted to them. From the prouder eminence to which later toils have advanced us, we may, possibly, look down with contempt upon the humble gradations by which we rose; but we should discover, on a nearer view, to the confusion of our ingratitude and presumption, that the collective wisdom of ages has selected the hieroglyphic idiom of Greece, to commemorate on each successive elevation of the pyramid the achievements of Science and of Art. Refer me to a department of knowledge where frightful myriads of unintelligible terms do not confront the tyro; daunting with their uncouth sounds and aspect, like the barbarian hosts on the plains of Cunaxa, the unpractised heart of the boldest adventurer; but, let him be but trained in Grecian discipline, these countless adversaries disperse on his advance, or crouch subservient to his will, and yield him immeasurable spoil. Nor are the causes obscure of this literary phenomenon. They exist in the composite structure of the most perfect of languages, which, from a few elementary signs, susceptible of an infinite variety of combinations, extends, like what we may conceive of the intercourse of angelic natures, to an instantaneously intelligible reflection of each new thought that dawns upon the soul. We have no reason to

believe that the practice of Philosophy in this respect will soon incur a revolution.

The natural connexion of the topics, leads us next to consider the influence of ancient upon modern literature ; nor will it be too much to say, that these are, and must ever be, inseparably allied. No English scholar, for instance, can be perfect in the theory of his native tongue, without a knowledge of those from which it is derived. Habitual contemplation of its choicest models may, indeed, impart to his own productions an imitative grace and formal dignity ; but that bold originality must ever be wanting, which springs from the mastery of our materials. This is evinced by the experience of those, who, in the last age of Greek and Roman literature, essayed to breathe the inspirations of modern genius in the dialect of former generations. But while emphasizing the opinion that it is worse than folly to hope for valuable success in any but vernacular composition, I need not ask the philosophical critic, what formed the models we should study ? What made the vernacular that it is ? What extended enriched and adorned it ? Nor would I waste my breath to inquire, whether it be possible to feel its full energy and beauty, without knowing the elements of which it is compounded, any more than I would question, whether an Athenian had expressed his whole idea by indicating the person of Demosthenes, while his graphic phraseology proclaimed him “ the Strength of the People.”

If then to the plus and minus philosopher of practical life, who admires the genius of Newton, Bowditch, and La Place, only in the rapid arrivals on the shipping list, and sees nought but domestic cloths and patent calicoes in the iris which paints the spray that dashes from Niagara, there be nothing useful, nothing adapted to ordinary affairs, in a full command of all the means by which the master minds radiate their fervours through society ; let him withdraw his boy from the converse of Academus and the Porticos, and train him exclusively in the dust and the sun ; not so mine ! while

I remember the apophthegm in Plutarch, that soldiers must be disciplined *martially* as well as *athletically*; while I know that Eloquence is as an armourer to Logic, burnishing her shield and pointing her spear.

It is not only, however, from its connexion with the etymological structure of our own language, that classical literature claims our regard. As comprehending some of the purest specimens of style, it would merit the attention of the aspiring scholar, though it were as foreign to the vernacular as the countless primitives of China. We cannot, it is true, pretend to compare the knowledge of ancient authors or speakers, on many interesting topics, with that of their more favoured successors. History, on her crowded page, has supplied the materials for a far more extensive induction to the statesman of modern times, than to those, whose engrossing policy was to balance the rivalry of a few petty republics, and limit the power of "the great king;" or even their sterner pupils, whose tutelar Terminus knew no other movement, than, on diverging lines, still further from the Capitol. Science, on seraph wing, has caught a nearer burst of that celestial harmony that Plato only dreamed of, and "the day-spring from on high," in the advent of Jesus, dispersed the shadows of that futurity, where the eagle ken of the philosophic "Father of his Country" could distinguish nought but the wavering gleams of conjecture. Yet in all that appertains to man as an individual, the child of circumstances, and the sport of passions, these pioneers of civilization were as well informed as the wisest of us. The very absence of books, which, through the almost miraculous agency of the press, have wrought such changes in the condition of society, during the last three hundred years, turned their attention, more earnestly, to their only resources, observation, experience and conversation; and hence, perhaps, it is, rather than from any original superiority of genius over the moderns, that we seek in vain their sententious wisdom, their captivating grace of arrangement, their picturesque expres-

sions, which group before the mental vision the most brilliant imagery, while the sternest critic could not rescind a phrase from the condensed argument, amid the gorgeous pomp and vapid circumlocutions of our reviewers, orators, novelists and statesmen.

I must not exhaust my strength or your patience by a more protracted disquisition, but will dismiss the subject, with the remark, that, to one who thoroughly understands the Greek and Latin languages, the French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, all ultimately descended from the first, (though the last four are more immediately dialects of the Latin, as pertaining to the fragments of the Roman Empire,) are comparatively easy of attainment: and this, not merely for ordinary purposes, but with a degree of critical understanding, without which, much of their literature would be dead letter to the scholar.

Perhaps, it will not be regarded as ill-timed, should I briefly delineate the system of classical instruction, which your Committee have been pleased to recognize as best calculated to promote their general design. Latin being, in a great measure derived immediately from the Greek, and deeply tinged from the parent source, it is thought more philosophical to go to the fountain head and descend the stream. This innovation upon long established practice is not without the sanction of great names, from Quintilian and Erasmus, to Gibbon, and the late accomplished Professor of Greek Literature at Cambridge University. It would rest secure on its intrinsic good sense, were it unsupported by authority and unknown in practice. It has, however, been successfully proved in the schools of Germany, where, as I am informed, it has superseded the antiquated system, and has been so strenuously recommended by the Harvard scholar I have frequently referred to, that it will doubtless (if not so already) be speedily adopted in his own land of improvement. And this suggestion induces me, for a moment, to revert to the increasing rather than diminishing necessity among ourselves for attention to classical studies. From their gradual decline among us it has, too hastily, been

inferred, that American society does not call for them; that American Courts of Justice and Political assemblies would not sustain the pedantry of quotations and allusions which the clear headed yeomanry could not understand. There has, certainly, been a tendency to this state of things since we became a Republic; and yet I should blush to think that the popular forms of government which inspired the gorgeous epic, the glowing drama, and impassioned, but finished eloquence of Greece and Rome, should yield different results among ourselves, though conducted on better principles.

But the fact, I have admitted, must be explained by reference to American *circumstances*, and not American *principles*. During the first stages of our political existence, while the ties of affection and interest were broken, which drew our youth, in loyal times, to the mother country, to receive the polish of education, we were too busily engaged in establishing the foundations of national security to bestow much care on the elegancies and decorations of society.

But prosperity has brought refinement, and refinement, in a thinking community, demands ennobling gratification. The swarms of our "Northern hive" have tasted the sweetness of the Attick bee, and lured, by the honeyed gale, they come to gather and dispense it in our flowery plains; and a necessary competition imposes, upon us, an equal improvement of the spring.

The details of instruction must, of course, be rapidly passed over in an essay like this. It may suffice to remark, for the satisfaction of persons to whom our printed outline may require explanation, that we purpose to exclude from our Greek course the tedious analysis which is the essence of the ancient system, and replace it by a philosophical synthesis, in which the learner, while familiarizing himself with the forms of the language, shall store his memory with its elementary terms, and be enabled, by practice on the rules of composition and derivation, to dispense in ordinary cases with the cumbrous aid of the Lexicon. It is expected,

by this plan, to communicate a critical acquaintance with the language, in less time than the boys of my day devoted to acquiring a vague smattering, which the lapse of a few years of idleness or professional application has entirely obliterated.

I cannot choose, but notice, here, a certain mode of thinking and speaking, in relation to these subjects, which more, perhaps, than any other difficulty embarrasses the labours and damps the hope of the aspiring teacher. We hear often of *a competent knowledge of Greek and Latin*. Parents tell us, that *they wish their children to study the Classics, enough for ordinary purposes*, but when you mark out a course to perfect them, shrink back with a disclaimer of such elevated views. But that we know the secret, and are restrained by courtesy, we might puzzle such directors, with some awkward demands for an explanation of their real meaning. It is this; they wish their children to *seem to know* what others *seem to know*; and, provided appearances are saved, trouble themselves no further about the matter, except it be to escape, as soon as possible, from the unpleasant importunity of the quarter bill. Others, too, whose own exertions advance them, late in life, to a more elevated sphere of action than they first began to move in, are ambitious of a few of the trappings of learning, that they may not be eclipsed in the vulgar eye. To both, my feelings prompt one only answer. "A little" classical "learning is a *useless* thing." You lose your time, you waste your money, you misapply the labours of your child, if your intentions terminate in a collegiate degree, which is within the reach of every orderly dunce in the country, or surmounting, by the help of a dictionary, the occasional quotation, which is thrown like a broken column across the line of professional march.

Another scheme has attracted notice, among the discoveries of the day, which comes recommended by such high authority, and has prompted so many inquiries from individuals most worthy of attention, that it demands a moment's considera-

tion, even in this tedious discourse. I allude to the Hamiltonian system of literal translations. So far as deep reflection, in the abstract, upon a plan which has not been submitted to personal inspection, can lead to a probable conclusion, I should pronounce it a valuable improvement. I have long felt and execrated the absurd cruelty of chaining down a sprightly lad, like a devoted victim of the Sphinx, to extract an obscure meaning from dark words, with no other light than his bewildered efforts can elicit from the columns of his dictionary. However laboriously we must, at first or last, acquire the independent signification and forms of words, their relations in phrases and sentences can only be understood from frequent observation, the access to which we cannot make too easy. The danger seems to be, that, in detestation of Lilly and the Westminster Grammar, we rush to opposite extremes. As a most efficient aid in the acquisition of languages, the Hamiltonian books must be introduced in our school ; but they cannot supersede the rational Grammars of the present age. Their principle, if I rightly understand it, is an induction by the scholar, who, from frequent particular examples, shall deduce his general rule. But as this refers us for success to the accuracy of his comparisons and abstractions, it relies too much for an exclusive system upon individual ability and zeal. To test its comparative merit by an extreme supposition, would we, if compelled to choose, abandon the Hamiltonian translations, though co-extensive with classical literature, or the Grammars and Anglo-Greek or Latin Lexicons ? With the humility proper for one who has no experience of the new mode, I should say, let us retain Valpy, and Buttman, and Jones, and Pickering, and Adam and Ainsworth.

It is true, Mr. Hamilton only proposes to make his boys do what these or their predecessors have done. It was by extensive reading that the first Grammarians and Lexicographers compiled their voluminous compends, and their emendators simplified and condensed them. But how many of

those who study Greek and Latin possess the acuteness, patient attention, power of abstraction and classification to do this well? And, if the end of the system be to furnish the scholar with rules, why not give him the perfect rule at once without all this trouble. It were certainly wiser for me to master the Touchstone, in three or four months, than pass a life in revolving the folios of the Year Books, Coke, Littleton, Dyer, Plowden and the whole library of black letter! An opposite arrangement seems, indeed, to border on the principle of the Philosopher, who, like some American politicians, deemed no man independent who could not provide for himself, clothing, food, lodging and all the necessities and comforts of life. I repeat that the Hamiltonian system will afford us valuable assistance, in the application and illustration of grammatical rules, and acquiring the turns of language; and I trust we shall not be allowed to want those materials for a fair experiment which the liberality of our patrons can alone, I believe, supply. I am equally opposed to the bigotry of prescription, and the levity which starts on the track of every projector.

My sketch, imperfect as it is, would be yet more incomplete were nothing said on the important topic of punishments and rewards. It has not escaped the attention of those to whose consideration the subject has been committed, that they were to legislate for a community of peculiar sensibility. It has, nevertheless, been decided, that temporary unpopularity could not be conscientiously weighed against the essential interests of education. To those, therefore, who counsel the abolition of corporal inflictions, I answer in the vein of Lycurgus, when advised to establish a pure democracy in the Lacedemonian State, "do you so first in your own families." But though the "*ultima ratio*" must find a place in every practicable scheme of education, its intemperate frequency must not be allowed to blunt the sensibility or degrade the spirit. We neither think to govern boys or men entirely by sermons, nor would yet establish their knowledge or du-

ties, like the barbarous land-markers of former times, solely on the association of pain. It will, therefore, be our aim to blend all requisite severity with the most delicate regard for moral sensibility. A regulation has, accordingly, been introduced, though without a possible reference to arrangements now existing, by which, errors of temper are guarded against in all but one of the instructors ; and which, at the same time, shields the delinquent from the demoralizing influence of open shame, and disarms him of those excitements to stubborn resistance we are apt to borrow from the presence and countenance of our associates ; while it affords an opportunity for his governor to appeal to the generous emotions of his heart, and the sober dictates of his understanding, without interrupting the general business of the school.

We turn to a more pleasing theme in the rejection of emulation as a principle of moral action. While we intend to distribute commendatory certificates to all who shall deserve them, as the noblest reward to noble hearts, the communication of pleasure to those we love and venerate, these will be founded on absolute merit alone, without reference to comparative achievements. By banishing, so far as in us lies, the baleful train of rivalry and envy, vanity and insolence, and desponding mortification, we trust, indeed, to inculcate practically the first principle of religion, conformity to the will of God, in relation to all his dispensations of intellect or fortune. Our School will not present the revolting spectacle of precocious genius towering in ephemeral splendour, exciting delusive hopes of unvarying success, and rioting in dreams of endless triumph, while the more tardy intellect, which constitutes the bone and muscle of society, is frowned into insignificance. Faithful industry, accurate attainments, will, we hope, illustrate our motto, "*magis esse quam videri.*" Where these appear, we hail the germs of certain promise. With the rapid but uncertain talent, that apprehends knowledge as the eye drinks in the day, our task will be to limit and direct its energies, to fix it in habits of exact attention,

to restrain its wild digressions, and shield it from that mania of "index learning" which "grasps the eel of science by the tail."

We seem to promise much, let us not be accused of the presumption we reprobate in others. Our confidence is rather in the certainty of our principles than in any peculiar ability to carry them into operation. Much occasion there will doubtless be, and especially in the case of him who has the honour to address you, for your most indulgent judgment. His debt of gratitude in his "Father land" is yet far from having attained its necessary limit. Firm and impartial support from the natural guardians of those committed to our charge, and unshaken confidence in the rectitude of our undertaking, can alone sustain us in our arduous enterprise. But if successful, we shall claim your thanks for preserving to you, unchanged in constitution, and uncontaminated by vicious license, yet with equal knowledge to that acquired elsewhere, the children of your hope; not unmindful too of the honours which pertain to our vocation, for I ask, with the Patriot and Sage of Tusculum, "*Quid munus Reipublicæ majus aut melius afferre possumus, quam si Juventutem bene erudiamus?*"

FINIS.